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Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Is Your Community Prepared?

Fire season is here again and while we all hope for the best, we do have to prepare for the worst. Not knowing when or where fire may strike makes it critical that emergency plans are reviewed, updated and in place.


This issue of the *Community Contact* features some tips to help community residents prepare for emergencies, and information from a new Firesmart promotion by Manitoba Conservation.

The bears are out and about as well, and we have a story with a happy ending thanks to the quick action of a community constable.

Community constables play an important role in community safety and we'd like to congratulate Diedre Hather of Barrows, Regis St. Laurent of Pelican Rapids and Greg Sanderson of Waterhen who have successfully completed community constable training.

We wish you all a safe summer.



Manitoba 
Building for the Future

Firesmart in Manitoba

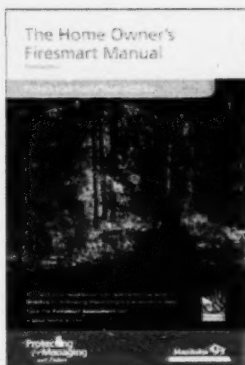
Learn how to protect your property from wildfire

Wildfire is a part of nature. It is the death of an old forest and the birth of a new one. Without fire, the character of Manitoba's boreal forests might change drastically. Some boreal forest conifers cannot release seeds without heat from a wildfire. Without fire, there would be massive changes in forest plant species and the wildlife that rely on the plants. People who rely on the forest for a living would suffer, too.

Hundreds of years ago, it was common for Aboriginal people to relocate from season to season and find more productive lands as forests grew old, tired or diseased. One could speculate that a nomadic lifestyle may have reduced exposure to wildfires simply because, as aging forests became more likely to burn, people would also be moving to new places in search of the things they needed to thrive.

The picture is somewhat different today. Permanent settlements displace nomadic traditions and most people, especially those with European ancestors view land as property. It is normal to spend your entire life in established communities. But the forests don't stop their natural cycles.

It's a good idea for people who live in or around the boreal forests to learn about their environment. The idea is not so much to save a forest from burning, but to do what you can to reduce the risk of loss or damage in a wildfire.



Enter Firesmart

Manitoba Conservation has just produced a publication called the *Home Owner's Firesmart Manual*. It's aimed specifically at helping people who live near urban/wilderness areas protect their homes and properties from wildfire damage.

Dick Bon, a fire intelligence officer at Manitoba Conservation, says the handbook-sized manual is based on a much larger manual from Partners in Protection, an Alberta-based coalition of government and non-government fire professionals from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Bon says the new handbook offered through Manitoba conservation gives basics that will help protect property. "You don't need to take a course," he says. "There is no cost. It's more about giving people an opportunity to put a little sweat equity into making their homes and communities safer."

The Firesmart manual is essential information to help property owners identify and mitigate risk. Standards in the manual will also interest community planners. Bon believes the Firesmart Manual is information many Manitobans need to have, especially in northern and rural areas.

This edition of *Community Contact* features excerpts from Manitoba Conservation's Firesmart manual. Order your copy of the manual or multiple copies for your community by calling Dick Bon at Manitoba Conservation 204-945-6802.

Any kind of vegetation is combustible

Mature trees, shrubs, grass and even your woodpile can easily ignite and increase the chance of wildfire damaging your home and property. Managing the space around your home and buildings is of utmost importance.

Do you have a cleared zone around your house and buildings?

The 10 metre space immediately surrounding your home is Priority Zone 1. It's the most critical area to introduce

Firesmart principles. A fuel-free space will give firefighters a chance to save your home from an advancing wildfire. A home without a fuel-free space can make firefighting difficult, if not impossible.

What to do?

Remove flammable trees and shrubs, such as pine, spruce and juniper. Other species such as aspen, poplar and birch have lower flammability rates. Also remove deadfall or

woodpiles from this area. Keep your grass mowed and watered.

Reprinted with permission from *The Home Owner's Firesmart Manual*, Third Edition



Don't be the cause of a wildfire



Wildfires often start as small accidental ignitions. By using Firesmart standards around your property you can help prevent an accidental wildfire from starting.

Firesmart your chimney

Chimneys should be constructed to meet building code requirements and have approved spark arrestors installed.

Burn barrels and fire pits

Burn barrels and fire pits should be located away from buildings and other combustible material. Always ensure your burn barrel has proper ventilation and is covered with a screen. Never leave your burning barrel or fire pit unattended while in use. For a safer method of disposal, bring your debris to a local landfill site.

Power lines and propane tanks

Vegetation should be cleared away from power lines, propane tanks and other fuel supplies.

Emergency facilities

Ensure your property has adequate emergency vehicle access and an on-site emergency water supply, such as a pond, tank, creek or lake.

On-site fire tools

Every home should have shovels, rakes, axes, garden hoses, sprinklers and ladders to help suppress wildfires and protect homes.

Reprinted with permission from *The Home Owner's Firesmart Manual*, Third Edition

Is the exterior of your home vulnerable to firebrand ignition?



If you are designing your home, eliminate areas where firebrands (airborne sparks and embers) could accumulate and ignite siding, windowsills or trim. Exterior siding should be fire resistant and extend from ground level to the roofline.

Eaves and vents are ready-made openings that can allow heat and embers to enter a building and ignite. Ensure eaves are closed in and screen all vents and soffits. Keep areas under decks and porches clear of debris and sheath the undersides with fire resistant material.

Reprinted with permission from *The Home Owner's Firesmart Manual*, Third Edition

Are your doors and windows Firesmart?

Be sure to remove flammable forest fuels within 10 metres of glazed window and door openings. Tempered, thermal, or smaller double pane windows will provide far greater protection than single pane glass.

Reprinted with permission from *The Home Owner's Firesmart Manual*, Third Edition

Be ready for wildfire

Summer is upon us and with it comes the probability of forest fires. The average season for wildfire is between April and mid-October. Manitoba Conservation's Fire Program is responsible for suppression of wildfires.

Information on Fire Updates, Fire Situation Reports, Fire Hazard Maps, and fire fighter employment is available on the Manitoba Conservation website: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/fire/.

The following will help you be prepared in case of forest fires:

Keep available:

- battery-operated radio
- flashlights
- spare batteries
- first aid kit and essential medication
- emergency food and water
- children's emergency supplies such as formula and diapers

Review your family's emergency escape plan and contact information. To protect yourself and your family during forest fire emergencies:

- Be ready to evacuate all family members, including pets.
- Minimize smoke inhalation in the home by closing all windows and doors. A wet towel along the window and door seams will minimize smoke even further.
- Keep the radio on to keep informed about the potential emergency.
- Stay in touch with local emergency management and follow directions provided.

If you must evacuate:

- Follow closely all instructions provided by local authorities.
- Make sure you know the safe evacuation routes.
- Listen for media announcements and know about your destination or reception center before you leave.
- If there is time, shut off the water, gas and electricity.

Your local emergency co-ordinator and elected officials are community emergency resource people who can tell you about emergency powers and evacuation procedures.

More information on fire and other emergencies is available at: www.gov.mb.ca/emo/pubinfo/fire.html and www.manitobaemo.ca. You may also contact Jean Champagne, northern regional emergency officer at 204-7821279 or jchampagne@gov.mb.ca.

Partnership Cre



Preparing a corner post for claim staking

Developed through a unique partnership between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Natural Resources Canada, University College of the North (UCN), Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Mining Association of Manitoba and the province, the Introduction to Prospecting Program is now being offered through UCN in The Pas.

The course includes wilderness navigation and survival training, an introduction to prospecting and exploration techniques, regulations, and financing as well as an overview of business and property development.

"We've been working with Aboriginal and northern communities and the exploration sector to meet the demands for training in the mining industry," says Jim Rondeau, Minister of Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines (IEDM). "By combining our expertise and resources we've created a new and enhanced program that will benefit individuals and communities interested in employment or economic development in this sector."

ates New Prospecting Program

Courses include business development and wilderness safety



First aid training for wilderness safety



Using blasting techniques to collect mineral samples

"The training will develop basic field skills that are transferable across sectors," says Tony Bos, president of UCN. "It will also help northern communities diversify their economy by providing educational and employment opportunities."

After the success of a pilot prospector training program delivered in 2003 for Sagkeeng First Nation, IEDM and UCN received numerous requests for a prospecting course from other First Nations. As a result, the Introduction to Prospecting Program was created.

"The new prospecting program improves educational opportunities for northern Manitobans as outlined in Manitoba's Northern Development Strategy. The strategy's aim is to enhance the quality of life for northern Manitoba communities through employment and training, economic development, housing, health and transportation initiatives."

The training also builds on the Manitoba Minerals Guideline developed by Aboriginal and First Nations representatives, Metis people, northern communities, the minerals industry and the province. The goal is to strengthen the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the province's mineral industry.

More information is available through the University College of the North at P.O. Box 3000, The Pas, Manitoba R9A 1M7 or at 204-627-8595, toll-free 1-866-627-8500, e-mail at info@ucn.ca or www.ucn.ca



Province Congratulates Community Constable Graduates



Greg Sanderson



Diedre Hather



Regis St. Laurent

Congratulations to Diedre Hather of Barrows, Regis St. Laurent of Pelican Rapids and Greg Sanderson of Waterhen, who successfully completed three weeks of intensive community constable training in February, 2005. The three have since been appointed special constables in their communities under Section 9 of *The Provincial Police Act*.

Training took place at South Port Aerospace Centre near Portage La Prairie. In all, 26 trainees attended from communities and First Nations all across Manitoba. The Canadian Law Enforcement Training Unit (CLET) RCMP Training Section, Regina, Saskatchewan, prepared the course material and covered a wide variety of police procedures. The first course of instruction contained some the following:

- problem solving and conflict negotiation
- communication skills
- police defensive tactics
- notebooks
- criminal justice issues
- power of arrest
- search and seizure (prisoners)
- statement taking
- verbal intervention
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- crime scene investigation
- weapons neutralization
- officer/violator conduct
- *Canada Labour Code*
- officer safety

Based on an incident management and intervention model, the course helps trainees learn how and when to intervene to ensure public and police are safe from harm. The curriculum describes five levels of resistance and the behaviours that define each level.

At the conclusion of training, CLET held a graduation ceremony to recognize achievements.

Two New Staff Join ANA



Paul Doolan

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs welcomes two new staff members, Paul Doolan, policy analyst and Angel Anderson, community audit manager. Both began their duties with the department in June, 2005.

Paul works with the Local Government Development Branch, Program Planning and Development in Winnipeg. He has worked as a co-ordinator and office administrator for the Health Care Products Association of Manitoba the past 11 years. Paul graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Arts degree in justice and law. He also received a degree in office management and administration from the Career Development Institute in Winnipeg.

A member of the Sagkeeng First Nation, Paul lives in the rural community of East Selkirk and enjoys many outdoor activities including golf, baseball, football and fishing. He is excited about working for ANA and looks forward to visiting Northern Affairs communities and making new acquaintances.



Angel Anderson

Angel works in the Finance and Administration Branch of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs in Thompson. Her responsibilities include financial analysis and the audit process for designated Northern Affairs communities, financial analysis of department expenditures and programs, and financial systems support for communities. Angel is a certified general accountant whose previous experience includes finance and business administration roles with Skyward Aviation and Cargill Ltd. in Winnipeg.

Originally from Gilbert Plains, Angel lives with her family at Paint Lake south of Thompson and enjoys fishing and relaxing at the lake. Her hobbies include stained glass art and photography.

Coming Next Issue

Public Works—maintaining community facilities and equipment



People PLACES Quick Action Saves Girl's Life

by Shanan Sorochnycki, Herald Reporter (reprinted with permission from the Dauphin Herald)

A close call in Crane River has people on the lookout for bears.

A brown bear lunged at a child near a community playground at approximately 6 p.m., May 18.

Fortunately, community constable Gus Delorme was in the area to intervene.

He had been out on an evening drive when he decided to go down Lakeshore Road, where the incident occurred.

"I didn't know actually what it was doing," said Delorme.

"It went from one bush to the next and then I saw a little girl on the road and I realized 'oh it's hunting' and going for the little girl.

It made a charge toward her and I managed to get my car between the bear and the little girl. The bear almost ran into my car."

Despite the car barricading the animal it continued to pursue the girl, said Delorme.

"She froze and the bear was trying to go around my car," he said.

"I blew the horn and that's what scared the bear. It ran out to the island and the little girl started to run at that time, too, and she ran quite a distance home."

Shortly after the incident, the bear was shot and killed in an effort to protect the community.

According to Delorme, people need to exert extra care this time of year and keep an eye out for animals.

"It's a late season. It's past the middle of May and there isn't a whole lot for them to eat and they are scrounging for roots and that kind of thing in the bush," he said.

"This time of year they seem to be coming closer to the community where they can scrounge and go for garbage."



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Community Council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.